

Message Text

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47

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 L-03 INR-07 SAB-01 TRSE-00

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P 122254Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6304

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 0201

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ENDERS FROM AMBASSADOR JORDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, PN

SUBJECT: 1976 MEAT IMPORT PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 303837 (B) PANAMA 8007 (C) PANAMA 7123

1. I HAVE JUST RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN MINISTER OZORES A FORMAL NOTE ASKING OUR GOOD OFFICES IN SEEKING ASSIGNMENT TO PANAMA OF AN IMPORT QUOTA OF 10 MILLION POUNDS OF BEEF INTO THE U.S. MARKET FOR 1976. THIS MAKES SPECIFIC WHAT WE HAD FORECAST IN EARLIER REPORTING (REFS. B AND C), I.E. THAT PANAMA HAVING FULLY MET ITS 1975 QUOTA, WOULD ASK FOR A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE FOR 1976. YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE QUOTA FOR THE PAST YEAR WAS 2.5 MILLION POUNDS.

2. I REALIZE THAT THIS MATTER HAS BEEN ON YOUR MINDS AND HAS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER MY PERSONAL REQUEST TO YOU BOTH FOR ONE MORE HARD LOOK IN THE HOPE THAT WE CAN MOVE TOWARD MEETING PART IF NOT ALL OF THIS REQUEST. THIS, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS PRECISELY THE KIND OF UNILATERAL ACTION THAT WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING SO AVIDLY TO HELP US CREATE A FAVORABLE MOOD HERE UNTIL WE CAN ACHIEVE A NEW TREATY. IT WOULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON KEY SEGMENTS OF THIS SOCIETY OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO THE AMOUNT INVOLVED--WHICH I RECKON IS ABOUT ONE WEEK'S SUPPLY

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OF HAMBURGER FOR CLEVELAND.

3. YOU REALIZE THAT PANAMA HAS BECOME A GOOD CUSTOMER FOR U.S. FARM PRODUCTS (GRAINS, SOY, ETC.). I WOULD HATE TO SEE THEM, IN IRRITATION, TURN TO CANADA OR ARGENTINA. MOREOVER, THEY HAVE BEEN STAUNCHLY WITH US IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SPREAD OF AFTOSA FROM FARTHER SOUTH. THIS BENEFITS PANAMA, OF COURSE, BUT IT IS OF THE GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE TO US AND TO THE REST OF CENTRAL AMERICA AS WELL.

4. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE AMOUNT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT IS SO SMALL IN RELATION TO OUR TOTAL IMPORT PROGRAM AS TO BE ALMOST INSIGNIFICANT. IT WAS ABOUT ONE-FIFTH OF ONE PER CENT OF THE TOTAL LAST YEAR, AND FAR LESS THAN THAT OF ANY OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA-- E.G. LESS THAN ONE FOURTH THAT OF EL SALVADOR. I NOTE FURTHER THAT IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME OTHER PRODUCERS IN THE REGION WILL FAIL TO MEET THEIR ASSIGNED QUOTAS IN THE YEAR AHEAD, AS IN THE PAST.

5. AT THE MEETING OF CHIEFS OF MISSION LAST MONTH, THE SECRETARY URGED US TO LOOK FOR BILATERAL ACTIONS THAT COULD BE TAKEN WITHOUT RECOURSE TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH AND THAT WOULD IMPROVE OUR STANDING WITH INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. HERE IS ONE SUCH ACTION THAT IS STARING US IN THE FACE. IT WOULD BE OF GREAT HELP HERE IN MANAGING THIS PRE-TREATY PERIOD TO BE FORTHCOMING ON SUCH MATTERS. AND IF WE CANNOT GO ALL THE WAY TO 10 MILLION, CAN WE NOT TRY FOR 7.5 MILLION? I REQUEST YOUR THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION, AND YOUR HELP. SINCERE THANKS.
JORDEN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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